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25X1 ISRAELI-ARAB BORDER TENSION

Border incidents between Israel and the Arab states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria have continued since the Israeli attack against the Egyptian army post at Gaza on 28 February. The movement of Israeli troops has been reported as a possible preparation for general hostilities should the Arab states retaliate sharply.

While the Gaza area is currently quiet and refugee rioters have been quelled, Israeli incursions into Jordan and Syria have resulted in at least four Jordanian deaths and in the formal alerting of the Jordanian Arab Legion. Israeli troop movements toward both Gaza and Jerusalem have been noted and the construction of hasty field fortifications by the Israelis on the Jordanian border have also been reported.

Israel, frustrated in its diplomatic efforts to obtain defense commitments from Western powers and exasperated with Egypt, apparently planned the aggressive Gaza "episode" partly to bring the whole Arab-Israeli border issue again before the UN Security Council. The council is scheduled to meet on the Gaza incident about 15 March. Continuing border incidents may be designed to keep the issue before world attention as well as to warn the Arabs.

Another incident on the scale of the Gaza attack would make it very difficult, however, for the Egyptians to refrain from retaliating in force, and Israel might launch a general attack if the Arabs can be provoked into such retaliation.